



## **THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON**

**TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

**IN PERSON ONLY**

**OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER) CITY HALL**

**8:00 a.m.**

### **A G E N D A**

**1. ORDER**

**2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

*As chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan nation.*

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

October 20, 2021 (attached)

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a) 2900 Plaza Survey and Feedback

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

a) Round Table Discussion

b) Quarterly Update

c) Proof of Vaccination Requirements

d) Call for Marketing Committee Members

**7. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.**, Okanagan Lake Room (Council Chambers), City Hall.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

**MINUTES OF THE  
TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING  
HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021  
OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM & ZOOM - 8:00 AM**

**PRESENT:** Bobby Bissessar, Accommodation Provider (*Via Zoom*)  
Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider, Chair  
Clinton Bilas, Restaurant  
Councillor Gares, City of Vernon (Appointed Member)  
Dauna Kennedy, Arts & Culture, Vice Chair (*Via Zoom*)  
Gale Woodhouse, Arts & Culture  
Kevin O'Brien, Attractions  
Mayor Victor Cumming (Alternate Member)  
Michael Van Horne, Golf  
Mike Fotheringham, Okanagan Indian Band  
Ricardo Smith, Sports and Events  
Richard Rolke, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

**DELEGATION:** John Welter, Sports & Cultural Society of North Okanagan

**ABSENT:** Brett Woods, Biking  
Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort (Non-Voting)  
Susan Lehman, Downtown Vernon Association  
Troy Hudson, Ski

**STAFF:** Hannah Lucich, Tourism Coordinator  
John Perrott, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism  
Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism  
Tracy Mueller, Committee Clerk

**ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 8:01 AM

**LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** *As Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.*

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Moved by Clinton Bialas seconded by Richard Rolke:

THAT the agenda for Wednesday, October 20, 2021 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Moved by Clinton Bialas, seconded by Richard Rolke:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Tourism Commission meeting held Wednesday September 15, 2021 be adopted.

**CARRIED.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**STAFFING UPDATE**

The Manager, Tourism introduced **Hannah Lucich, Tourism Coordinator.**

- Hannah recently joined the City of Vernon; she previously worked at SilverStar Mountain.
- Prior working at SilverStar she worked in the Tourism industry in New Zealand.
- As of October 20, 2021, Hannah is on "week three" with the City of Vernon and is a welcome member of the Tourism team.

**NEXT STEPS - TWO NEW POSITIONS**

The Manager, Tourism provided an overview regarding the Two (2) Tourism New Positions approved by Council as follows:

- The Human Resources Department has provided a first quarter timeline to start the hiring process.

**PRESENTATION - SPORTS & CULTURAL SOCIETY OF THE OKANAGAN (SCSNO)**

The Manager, Tourism introduced Josh Welter, Executive Director from Sport & Culture Society of the North Okanagan (SCNSO) to provide the Commission with an overview of the various resources and tools created for the North Okanagan sport, culture, and recreation community.

The delegation shared a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the following items:

- There are currently four (4) board members with SCSNO and essentially what they have been tasked to do over the years is put together a network of information; the next step is bringing people to the community.
- Vernon is hosting the BC Winter Games in February 2022. The event will allow for spectators. In the past there have been about 1500 athletes participating in the event.
- SCNSO put together a comprehensive Resource Toolkit on what it takes to run an event; the documentation is available on the Society's website <https://www.scsno.ca/>; members of the Committee were invited to visit the website and review the contents and provide their comments.
- The delegation noted that the website contains excellent volunteer database whereby people can reach out, volunteer, and get engaged.
- There are currently 112 sporting groups that are looking to put events on. When the world turns the lights back on there is a great talent base to work with.
- As part of the "tool kit" SCSNO is developing various templates for letters of support for bid assembly; and there several highly skilled individuals on the Board of Directors who have experience in putting together bids and supporting documentation.
- When organizations look to produce events, dealing with the City of Vernon is needed in terms of procuring the necessary permits. To assist with that process, SCSNO has excellent resources and can provide guidance in regarding what specific groups need to be contacted to secure the permits in accordance with local bylaws.
- In terms of sponsorships, the SCSNO website has a listing of who individuals can approach with sponsorship opportunities.
- The delegation noted that the City of Vernon is currently not a member of Sport Tourism Canada, and it is an item that SCSNO plans to discuss with the City of Vernon in the coming weeks.
  - In response the Tourism Manager noted that she is in the process of exploring partnership opportunities with Sport Tourism Canada.

- In terms of value-added content, SCSNO has been working on developing a certification course for locals to take, employees can be registered.
  - The program will have an emphasis on event planning and executing.
  - The training course will be based on the "train the trainer" model.
- In terms of the next steps, the SCSNO will continue to grow; there is momentum, events are going to start up again, and the City of Vernon will bid and get them.

Comments / Questions from members of the Commission were as follows:

- **Is the SCSNO working to identify key events that would be good for Vernon?** In response, the delegation noted that a lot of the events in the next 3 - 6 months already have pre-determined venues; however, the aim is to look toward future events.
- **The delegation was thanked by the Commission.** A member of the Commission shared that they are part of developing the Cultural Centre within the City of Vernon and that the documents provided on the SCSNO website have been very beneficial and appreciated.

**MARKETING UPDATE**

The Manager, Tourism provided a brief marketing update. The following points were noted:

- A full quarterly marketing and tourism projects update will be provided at the November meeting.
- An electronic consumer fall newsletter went out a few weeks back, provided a high-level overview of what is happening in the City of Vernon in the fall.
  - There is a new campaign in place promoting Vernon as a hiking destination. Staff are talking with key people in the hiking industry, there are beautiful trails and in comparison, with other DMOs we have an opportunity to be a "hiking destination" in BC.
  - Currently staff is promoting attractions that are a draw for the season, and the activity guide which contains a myriad of local businesses to round out the autumn activities.

- Within the fall newsletter there was an invitation online for visitors to book with local hoteliers. It takes visitors to the hotelier's page on Tourism's website.
- **Castanet.net** - The Tourism team launched a campaign with the publication Castanet.net and it performed really well with the content. Even though the pandemic is easing, people are eager to support their own backyards and support Vernon.
- **Top Performing Webpages:**
  - BC Trip Planners
  - Airport Transit from Vernon to Kelowna has crept back up.
  - Traffic by region, BC has out performed everyone, followed by Alberta and Ontario. Looking into an Eastern specific campaign for Winter.
  - Are running a YouTube Campaign - partnered through Destination BC Co-Operative Marketing Campaign.**Action:** Staff will email a link to members of the Commission.
- **Scheduled / Targeted Campaigns:**
  - Video Pre-Roll with NHL.com
  - KelownaNow - Contest Campaign
  - CityTV - TV Commercial 300 spots
  - Vancouver Is Awesome - Sponsored Content
- **"Off Track Travel" Influencers Gemma and JR** -- They are a *"Canadian couple who live explore beyond the beaten path and love helping others do the same"*. Tourism staff are working with them directly, and any content that is created is living on the first page of Google which is great advertising for the City of Vernon and all we have to offer.

#### **Upcoming Advertising / Media Bookings:**

- Working out the details of the BC Magazine spread, will be doing a feature on Winter Carnival in February.
- 4 Page Spread booked with BC's guide for the Arts. Will be working with them to make a nice array of amenities on the guide for Vernon.
- Will partner with Sparkling Hills on Health and Wellness Campaign. Focusing on the full array of activities available in Vernon.
- Talked with SilverStar regarding the options available for visitors to the City of Vernon.

**Housekeeping:**

- Tourism Commission Terms will be wrapping up, everyone is available to apply. The deadline for applications was extended to Thursday, November 4, 2021.

**A member of the Commission posed a question re: the downtown closure:**

- In response staff advised that they are working with the Downtown Association, received feedback from a membership survey, the information provided will be brought back next week in a report to Council. Based on that report, will have information to review what worked, what could be improved and how it works with the businesses.

**Members of the Commission provided the following feedback in a roundtable discussion format regarding the 2900 Plaza/ 2900 block street closure:**

- It was discussed that the information gathered will provide a better scope of what can be done next year.
- It was noted that overall, everyone supported the initiative and expressed hope that it will continue but there were many learning opportunities
- Next year the businesses will be putting out more of an interesting (not barricaded) area, make it attractive, the businesses will want to work with it.
- The Christmas Movie shoot had a really good vibe, and it would be nice to be able to get others involved in activities such as that, setup a festive atmosphere that would attract consumers to the downtown area.
- Due to COVID-19, it would assist if there was better directional signage, and guidance of where people can sit and go with their food and beverages.
- It would be nice if the events could be expanded in some parts of the evenings once / week it would be really incredible.
- It was discussed that there could be an application whereby interested vendors in a fashion similar to a farmer's market concept. If there was a planning team that devised sectors, an entrance / exit and COVID-19 protocols.
- It was discussed that the new gelato shop, La Carraia Gelateria Café, has become a bit of an anchor of downtown and it has

created something on the corner to drive traffic to other businesses.

- We need to revisit with more planning and more partnership. We need to look at it now, remove some of the barriers.

In response to the feedback received from members of the Commission, staff noted that a further presentation to Council could have a more of a lens based on feedback and Commission members can speak to what worked and what did not.

**Councillor Gares left the meeting at 8:48 AM**

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 17, 2021** at 8:00 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Richard Rolke, seconded by Clinton Bialas:

THAT the Tourism Commission meeting of October 20, 2021 be adjourned.

**CARRIED.**

The Tourism Commission meeting adjourned at **8:56 AM**

**CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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Chair